

## President's Greetings

Recently I learned that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has established 27 different kinds of nonprofits and that 1.5million of these entities are registered nationwide. I also learned that the Friends of Freedom Public Library, Inc. is a particular type of non-profit with a key characteristic that contributes to its success and benefits its members in a remarkable way.

The key characteristic of our Friends group is that we are an all-volunteer organization. While it is true that from time to time we hire people to help us with our projects—labor to move books, newspaper ad writers, speakers and other presenters—we do not hire anyone to run our operations or govern us. We, ourselves, determine how we will accomplish our mission and what our responsibilities and procedures will be.

This all-volunteer approach produces the energy that makes us successful. Our active members work faithfully within our group because they believe in our core values: Friendship, Promoting Literacy, Community Outreach and Continuous Improvement. They have chosen the Freedom Friends because our work aligns with their beliefs. While we always need to build consensus around major initiatives, that consensus is usually reached efficiently because of our shared core values.

Our all-volunteer approach can benefit each of us who is actively involved in another, truly amazing way. A 2017 Mayo Clinic study found that senior volunteering:

- Decreases the risk of depression
- Gives volunteers a sense of purpose
- Teaches valuable skills
- Increases mental and physical activity
- Helps reduce stress
- May lengthen life

Of the more than 200 Friends in our group approximately 30 are active members who volunteer two or more hours a week. It would be wonderful in many ways if 30 more of our members would become active implementers of our mission and reap the benefits of volunteering!

Florence Pritchard

## Focus on Freedom

“Before” and “After” pictures serve as a very effective way of demonstrating positive change. As is often said, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” With those ideas in mind, this month’s “Focus on Freedom” column presents readers with two pictures of the library staff’s workroom as that space now exists.



Not surprisingly, library staff find it challenging to work within this cluttered and unsafe environment. In response to these concerns, the Friends of Freedom Public Library have set aside close to \$14,000 to cover the cost of renovating this work space. New furniture, carpeting and careful re-routing of paths for the constant transfer of books to and from other branch libraries will reduce clutter and increase safety and efficiency.

A local office supply company has drawn up comprehensive plans for the renovation. Work should begin within the next six weeks. When the renovation is complete, this column will proudly display “After” pictures. Library staff, Friends and patrons can then celebrate this improvement in library facilities.

## On the Horizon

Video streaming services, i-pads, desktops, laptops and phones that go beyond smart to genius—all bring us stories and articles, fiction and non-fiction. Yet people continue to buy and read those clumps of paper, cardboard and ink called “books.”

Why is this so? Why is it that our upcoming April 25-27 book sale is a jewel set right in the center of the mission and work of the Freedom Friends? Four reasons come immediately to mind, reasons that link strongly and deeply to our nature as human beings.

As each child learns to read, she/he steps symbolically into the human family, a distinct and amazing segment of all living things--no others of which can read. Albeit unconsciously, our book sale reaches to this deep understanding in those who come to pore over books.

Many who come to our sale find books they have not seen for a long time but remember as good friends. These books can call up and re-enliven people, places and events from the past. These memories, in turn, enrich and add dimension to each sale goer’s personal universe.

Then there are the quiet chats between book shoppers. As they browse, they share likes and dislikes, favorite characters, recommendations pro and con. This helps enhance that sense of community Friends and staff alike want to radiate out from Freedom Public Library.

Finally, many who purchase books and carry them home do so with a sense of having shopped well for desired possessions. Again, at a deep and unconscious level they know as they possess each book, they protect it as part of our human story.

Are these ideas too high-flown for clumps of paper, cardboard and ink? A book sale is a book sale is a book sale. Or is it? Readers can decide. And whatever tendrils of memory and humanity they breathe to life, the books will be there. Come one and come all to the Freedom Friends April book sale!